

Rules of the Game

Types and Templates (Part Three)

By Skip Williams



Last week, we looked at creature types and briefly considered what happens when a creature's type changes. This week, we look at types and templates by considering a few ways a creature's type can change.

Temporary Changes to a Creature's Type

Some **spells**, such as the *polymorph* and *shape change* spells, can change a creature's type while the spell lasts.

When one of these spells changes a creature's type, it usually also grants the **subtypes** of the assumed form (check the description of the spell or other effect to be sure). The subject also temporarily gains the **augmented subtype** for its original type.

The subject loses any subtypes it has in favor of the assumed form's subtypes. For example, a human turned into a troll gains the **giant type** and the augmented humanoid subtype. The subject retains the features of its own type. It gains the traits of the assumed type -- except for any extraordinary qualities included in those traits. If you're having trouble deciding which type traits you gain, refer to [Rules of the Game's original study of polymorphing](#).

Class-Induced Changes in Type

Several character classes, such as the **monk**, include a change in type as a class feature. These classes are primarily intended for use with humanoid characters with a single **Hit Die** or less (so that they trade all their racial Hit Dice for class Hit Dice; see page 290 in the *Monster Manual*). The change in type is easy to handle when the class is used as intended. When creatures other than humanoids take levels in such classes, however, the situation can prove less straightforward. What happens, for example, when an undead monk becomes an **outsider**? The rules aren't much help in that situation, but a little common sense can solve the problem. This section offers some unofficial suggestions for handling things when various creatures undergo class-induced type changes.

Humanoids: As humanoid with a single racial Hit Dice gains the type noted in the class description along with the augmented human subtype. If the new type is outsider, the character also gains the native subtype. For example, a human who reaches 20th level in the monk class gains the perfect self class feature and becomes an outsider. The character's old creature type and subtypes were humanoid (human). The character's new creature type and subtypes are outsider (augmented humanoid, human, native).

As noted in Part One, the character's class features and other class benefits don't change. In keeping with the general rules on changing types, the example character retains the features of the humanoid type, but gains 60-foot **darkvision** (one of the outsider type's traits; see page 313 in the *Monster Manual*). The remaining traits of the outsider type are either irrelevant to the character or negated by the native subtype. For example, the example character gains no new weapon or armor proficiencies because the character already has all the proficiencies its "description" mentions. The example character still needs to eat and sleep, and she still can be raised or resurrected because she has the native subtype.

So what happens, if a humanoid with more than one racial Hit Die changes type due to a class feature? For example, what happens to a bugbear (3 racial Hit Dice) who reaches 20th level as a monk and becomes an outsider? The rules don't say, but according to Part One, a creature usually retains the features of its original type (Hit Dice size, **base attack bonus**, **base saves**). The change in type doesn't alter the bugbear's racial Hit Dice, nor the base attack bonus, base save bonuses, or skill points the bugbear gains from those Hit Dice.

Other Creature Types: Creatures with most other types are affected just as humanoids are when class features change their types. Undead creatures require some special handling. The transformation into an **undead** creature is profound -- so much so that the rules often don't bother with assigning the augmented subtype when creatures become undead (for example, the mummy and the ghoul). Transformation to undeath also is pretty much unalterable unless the creature returns to life (in which case it would regain its old creature type). To reflect the unique state of undeath, apply any class-induced change in type to the creature's original type, even if the creature has not received the augmented subtype for its original type. For example, a ghoul with levels in the monk class begins as an undead (augmented humanoid). When the ghoul becomes a 20th-level monk, it becomes an undead (augmented outsider, native). The ghoul retains all its undead features and traits.



What's Next?

We're out of time once again. Next week, we'll look at the most common form of type change -- acquiring a template.

About the Author

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of *Dragon Magazine* for many years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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